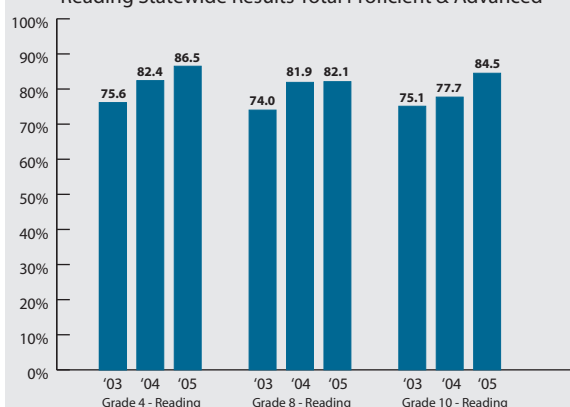


SCORES SHOW STUDENTS DOING BEST IN READING, SOME ACHIEVEMENT GAPS NARROWING

More Idaho students are performing at or above grade level in math and reading and the achievement gap in 10th grade is shrinking, according to 2005 Spring Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) results released by the Idaho State Board of Education.

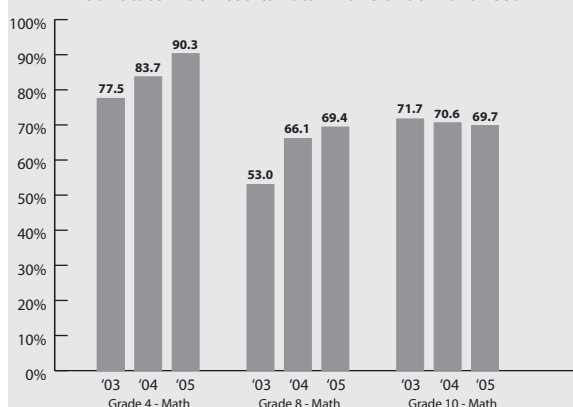
Reading Statewide Results Total Proficient & Advanced



The test results also revealed a significant change: for the first time in ISAT's three-year history, reading scores accounted for the highest overall proficiency rates followed by math and language usage. This was a striking change from where language usage was the highest proficiency rate subject followed by reading and math. Overall results mirrored national trends with scores steadily increasing in grade 3, peaking at grade 4, declining in middle school and rebounding slightly by 10th grade.

"The ISAT tracks student achievement at an individual student, school, district and state level. With three years of data, we can see that many of our efforts are paying off, particularly in reading," said Rod Lewis, President of the State Board of Education. "More Idaho students are performing on grade level than ever before and some achievement gaps are actually narrowing."

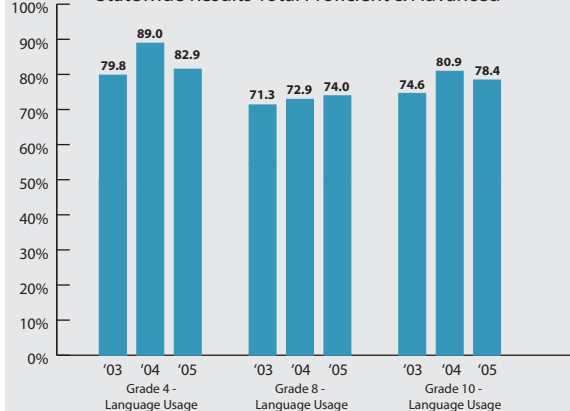
Math Statewide Results Total Proficient & Advanced



Past ISAT results have highlighted significant achievement gaps between ethnic minority and White students. This year's testing shows statistically significant decreases in achievement gaps particularly in grade 10. For instance, in grade 10 reading results, the achievement gap decreased between Native American students and White students and Hispanics and White students. Economically disadvantaged students closed the gap between non-economically disadvantaged students in grade 10 reading as well. In grade 10 math, Hispanic students also showed significant gains to close the achievement gap.

Language Usage

Statewide Results Total Proficient & Advanced



Idaho State Board of Education

Roderic Lewis, President
Laird Stone, Vice President
Milford Terrell, Secretary
Paul Agidius
Blake Hall
Dr. Marilyn Howard
Karen McGee
Sue Thilo

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What is the ISAT?

ISAT stands for the Idaho Standards Achievement Tests. The tests are given in grades 2-10. The ISAT consists of three multiple-choice tests in the core subjects of reading, math and language usage. The Board recently piloted a new science test for grades 5, 7, and 10. The ISAT is offered in the fall and spring of each academic year allowing teachers to track student achievement. Districts may choose to test students two additional times during the year. Students take the test on a computer and receive immediate feedback. The tests are not timed, but students usually take 45-60 minutes per test.



Fall vs. Spring

- Fall: The tests are adaptive, meaning the questions get more or less difficult based on how the student answers the previous questions.
- Spring: The tests in grades 3-8 are blended meaning they have 42 items that are on-grade level and 20 items that are adaptive. The 10th grade test is completely on-grade level and grades 2 and 9 are adaptive.
- Fall: Tests are given in reading, language usage and math.
- Spring: Tests are given in reading, language usage and math.
- Fall: State reports on student growth.
- Spring: State reports on student proficiency.
- Fall: Teachers receive information to assist in improving instruction.
- Spring: Teachers receive information to determine if instructional techniques were effective.

How is the ISAT Scored?

The ISAT is scored on a scale of 150 to 300. Each point or Rasch Unit (RIT) on the scale represents a unit of knowledge. Each subject - reading, math and language usage - has separate scoring scales. So, a 200 on the reading scale is not equivalent to a 200 on the math scale. To calculate a student's score, each question is assigned a difficulty value on the RIT scale. Each student's score is calculated by a formula that includes the RIT difficulty of the item and the number of correct answers. The score is not an average of the number of items answered correctly. Once the student takes the test, scores are converted to four academic determinations: advanced, proficient, basic or below basic. These determinations are based on a proficiency table. For instance, a student scoring a 182 RIT score in reading would be considered on-grade level, but would need a 184 in language usage and a 185 in math to be proficient.

Proficiency Definitions

ADVANCED: Exceeds Standards

The student demonstrates thorough knowledge and mastery of skills that allows him/her to function independently above their current educational level.

The student demonstrates comprehension and understanding of knowledge and skills above his/her grade level.

The student can perform skills or processes independently without any significant errors.

PROFICIENT: Meets Standards

The student demonstrates mastery of knowledge and skills that allow them to function independently on all major concepts and skills related to their educational level.

The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of all information relevant to the topic, at grade level.

The student can perform skills or processes independently without any significant errors.

BASIC: Below Standards

The student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills usage but cannot operate independently on concepts and skills related to his/her educational level. Requires remediation and assistance to complete tasks without significant errors.

The student has an incomplete knowledge of the topic and/or misconceptions about some information.

The student requires assistance and coaching to complete tasks without errors.



BELOW BASIC: Critically Below Standards

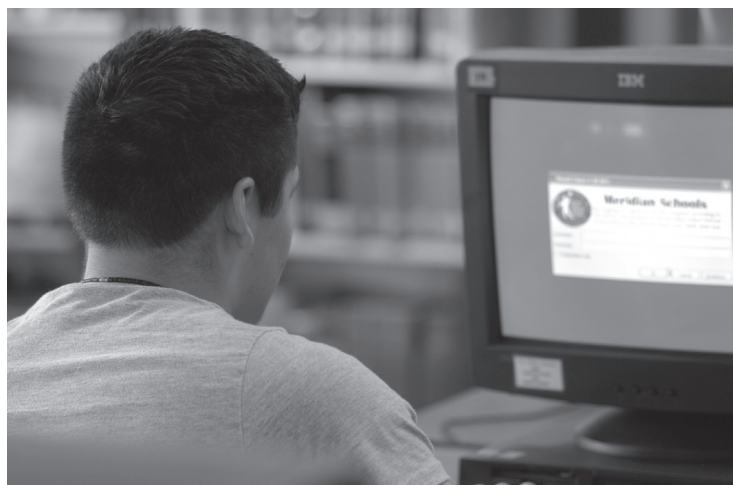
The student demonstrates significant lack of skills and knowledge and is unable to complete basic skills or knowledge sets without significant remediation.

The student has critical deficiencies of relevant knowledge of topic and/or misconceptions about some information.

The student cannot complete any skill set without significant assistance and coaching.

10th Grade Graduation Requirements

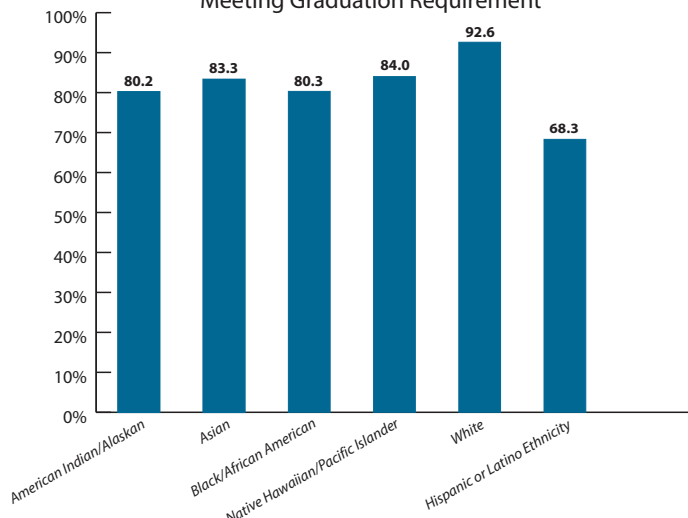
The State Board of Education is committed to all students achieving proficiency in math, reading and language usage. To provide assurance that students have this core knowledge, the State Board added a graduation requirement that all 10th grade students pass the 10th grade ISAT to receive a high school diploma. This requirement is in addition to the attendance and academic credits that students must complete. Students have nine opportunities to take the tests beginning with the spring of their sophomore year. The Board chose a phased-in approach for this requirement. Students in the class of 2006 are required to pass the test at an eighth grade level, students in the class of 2007 must pass at a ninth grade level with full implementation in 2008. Students can “bank” their scores after passing each test. So, if a student passes the reading and language usage sections but not math, the student only needs to pass the math test to complete the ISAT graduation requirement. If a student does not pass the ISAT they can appeal to their local school district for an alternate mechanism to fulfill the requirement.



Required 10th Grade Graduation Scores

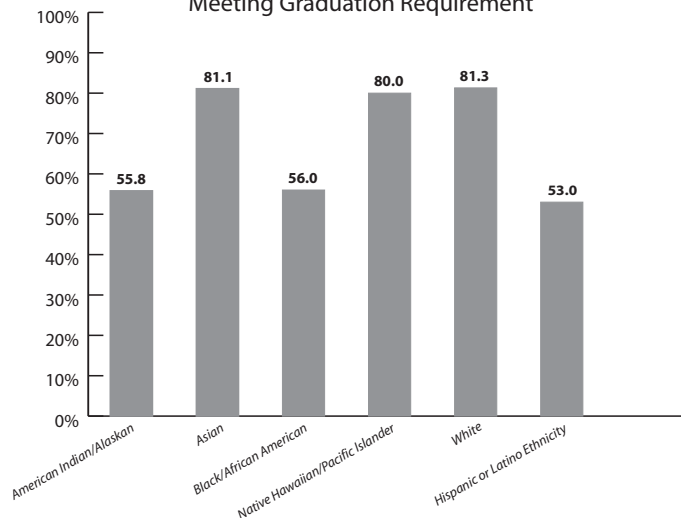
	10th Grade Proficient	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008
<i>Reading</i>	224	218	221	224
<i>Math</i>	242	236	239	242
<i>Language Usage</i>	222	216	219	222

Class of 2007 Ethnicity Reading Statewide Percentage Meeting Graduation Requirement



Test results using the 3-point phase-in graduation requirement equivalent to a 9th grade proficiency.

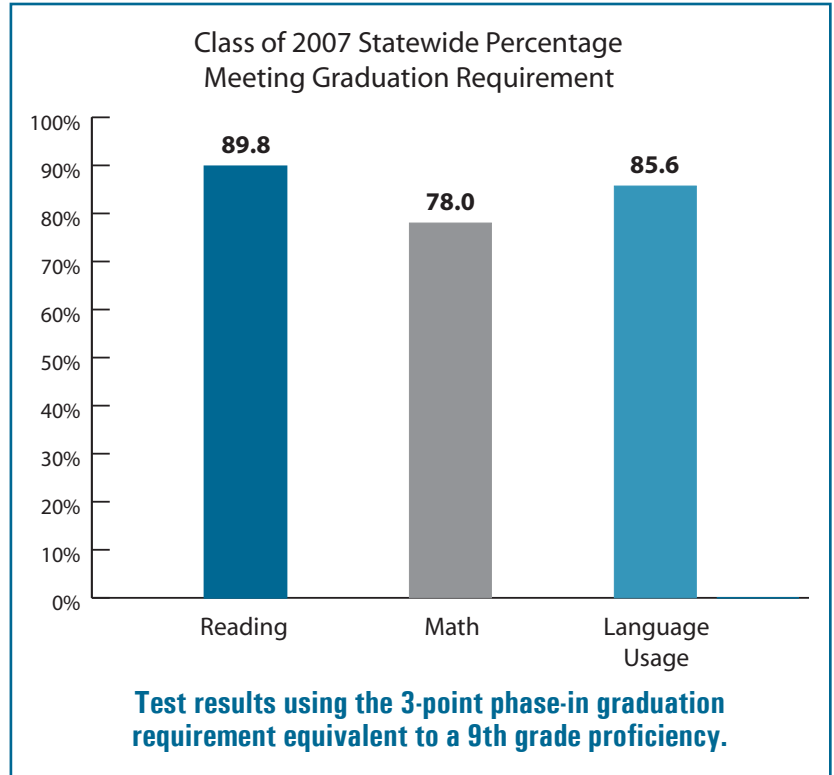
Class of 2007 Ethnicity Math Statewide Percentage Meeting Graduation Requirement



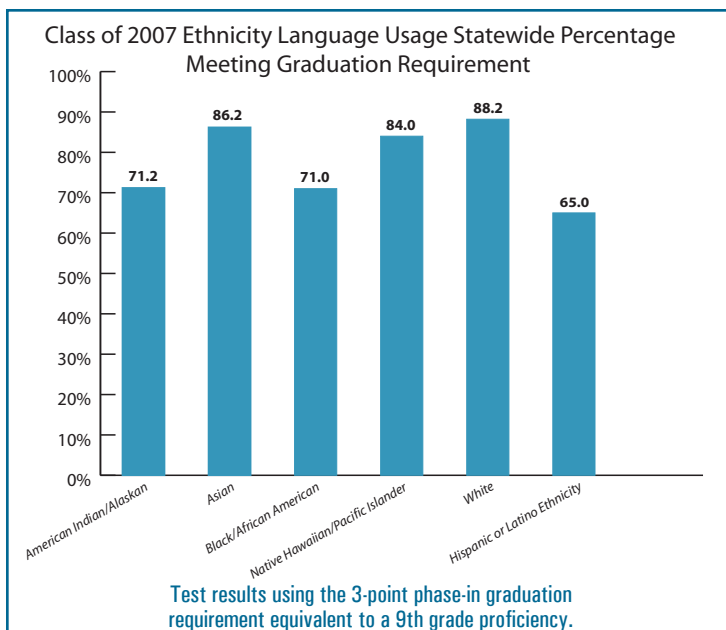
Test results using the 3-point phase-in graduation requirement equivalent to a 9th grade proficiency.

Exit Exam Results

The test with the highest passing rate for the class of 2007 with the phased-in requirement was in reading at 89.8%. The 2007 phased-in passing rates for language usage and math were 85.6% and 78%, respectively. When compared to the passage rates for 2004 (with the 6-point phase-in or an 8th grade level), nearly the same percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading in 2005 as in 2004, 89.8% to 90.1%. Three subgroups saw increases in the percent of students passing reading from 2004 to 2005, even with a more stringent requirement: American Indian/Alaskan Native 76.9% to 80.2%; Black/African American, 80% to 80.3%; and Hispanic, 67.4% to 68.3%. The overall passage rates in all other subgroups in all three subjects showed a decline in the passage rates.

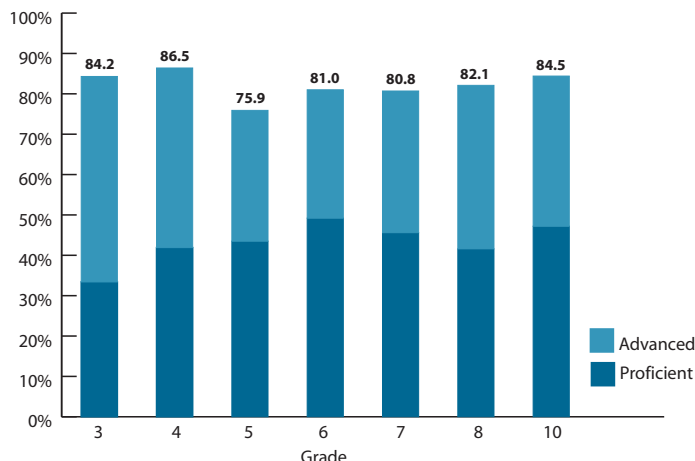


Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are exempt from the graduation requirement in 2006 and 2007. A student is considered LEP if their home language is another language other than English which influences their speaking abilities. Students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or students given an alternate assessment are also exempt from the graduation requirement in 2006 and 2007.



Statewide Reading Results

2005 Reading Statewide Results Percentage Proficient & Advanced



The highest proficiency rates in reading for 2005 were in 4th grade at 86.5%. Grades 3 and 10 followed closely at 84.2% and 84.5%. Grade 5 had the lowest proficiency rate at 75.9%.



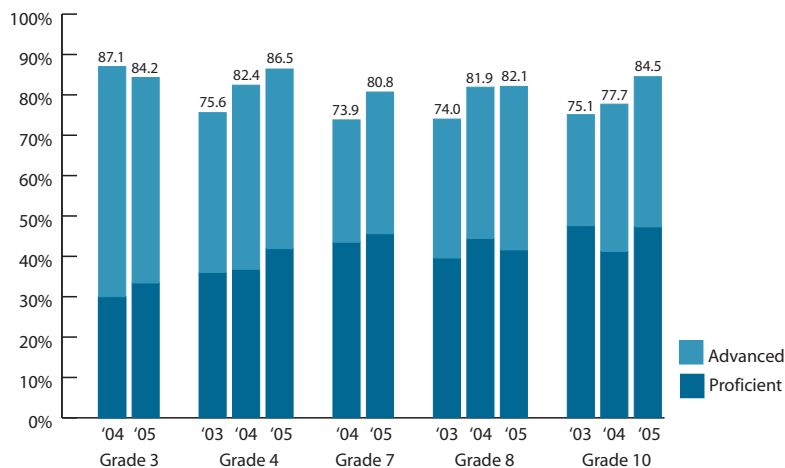
Faces of ISAT

WANDA QUINN
COUER D'ALENE
SCHOOL BOARD
TRUSTEE



From the perspective of a trustee, as the focus shifts from an instructor's teaching to student learning, the Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) provides the Board of Trustees with a necessary measure of student learning. Using ISAT test scores we can make several comparisons. We can identify students that are proficient at grade level, non-proficient and advanced in their scores. We can compare subgroups to verify that all students are achieving and we can compare a student's scores over time. We can target students in need of remediation and those needing advanced teaching. Most importantly, it informs educators as to an individual student's growth from fall to spring.

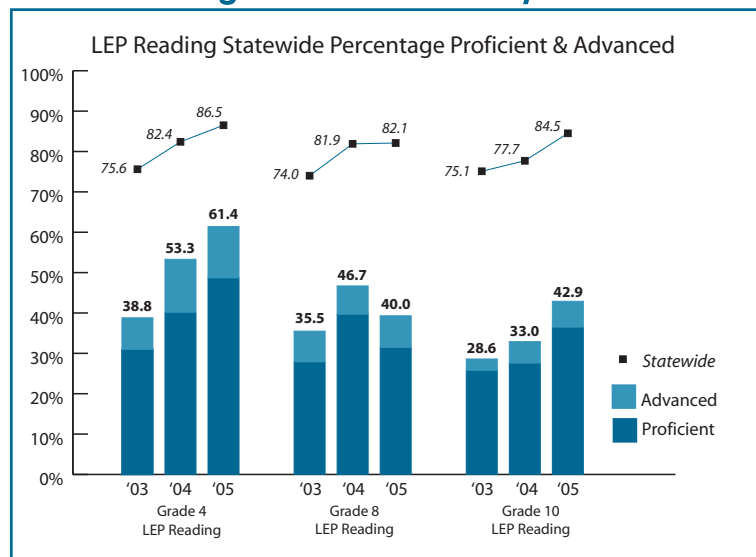
Reading Statewide Percentage Proficient & Advanced



Third grade was the only grade that decreased. In 2004, 87.1% of students in 3rd grade were proficient in reading and in 2005, 84.2% were proficient. Seventh grade proficiency rates increased by 6.9%. Grades 4, 7, 8, and 10 showed strong gains in the proficiency rates over three years. The highest gains were 10.9% in 4th grade and 9.4% in 10th grade.

NOTE: The State of Idaho has phased in on-grade level tests to determine proficiency levels. In 2003, grades 4, 8 and 10 were given on-grade level tests. In 2004, grades 3 and 7 were added and in 2005, grades 5 and 6 were added. Thus, in the statewide graph above grades 4, 8 and 10 have three years and grade 3 and 7 have two years of proficiency data.

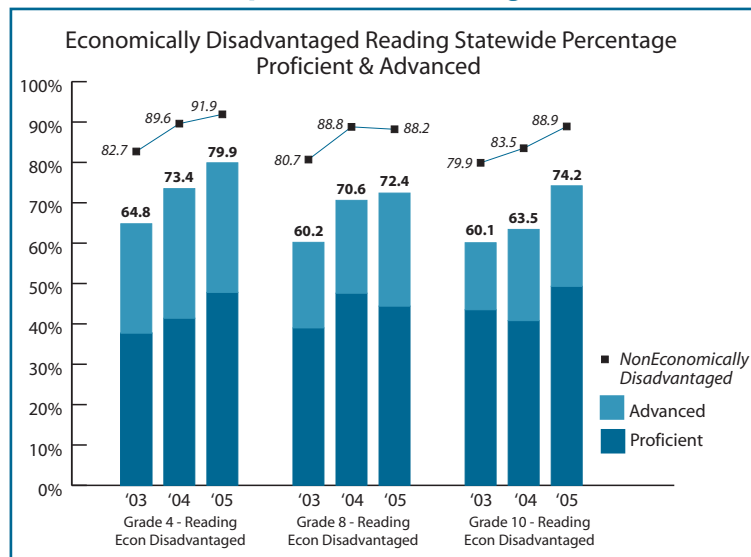
Limited English Proficiency



Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have continued to make gains except in 8th grade reading.

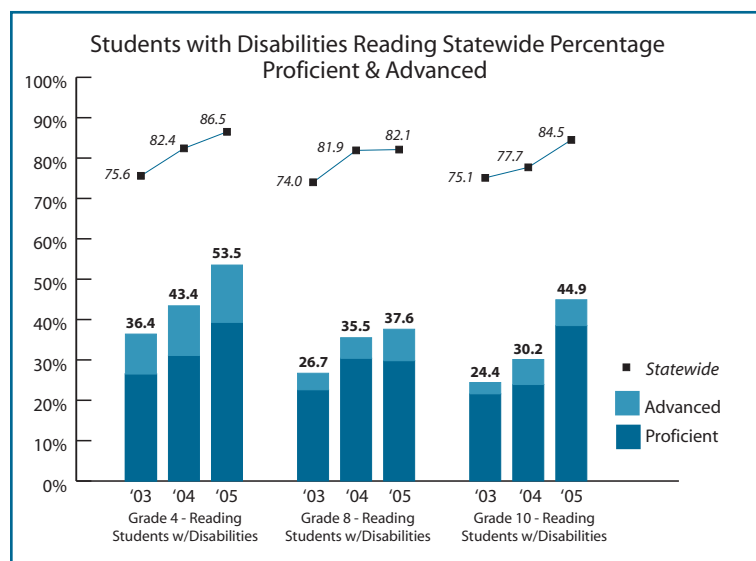
NOTE: LEP data collection changed in 2004 when students who had exited an LEP program within the past two years began being counted in the subgroup results. This change affects the results when viewing 2003 data.

Economically Disadvantaged

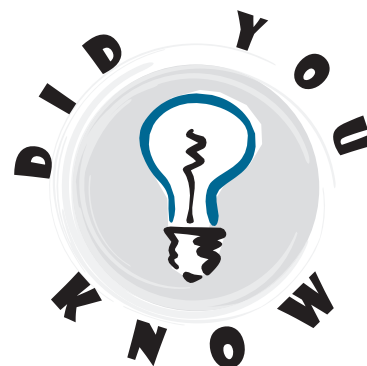


Proficiency rates for economically disadvantaged students have improved in grades 4, 8 and 10 every year for the past three years. The highest gains were in 10th grade from 2004 to 2005 where 10.7% more students were proficient or advanced. The gains made in 10th grade reading were statistically significant in closing the gap between economically disadvantaged students and those that are non-economically disadvantaged from 2004 to 2005. Conversely, there was a statistically significant increase in the gap between the two groups for 7th graders in reading for the same period.

Students with Disabilities

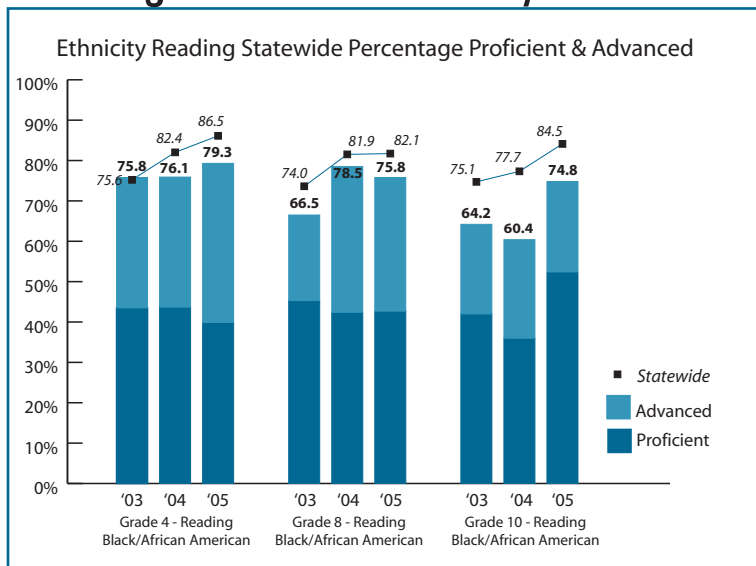


Students with disabilities have made continuous progress, increasing the proficiency percentages over 14% in reading for grade 10 from 2004 to 2005. In 4th grade, 17.1% more students with disabilities scored proficient or advanced in 2005 than in 2003.

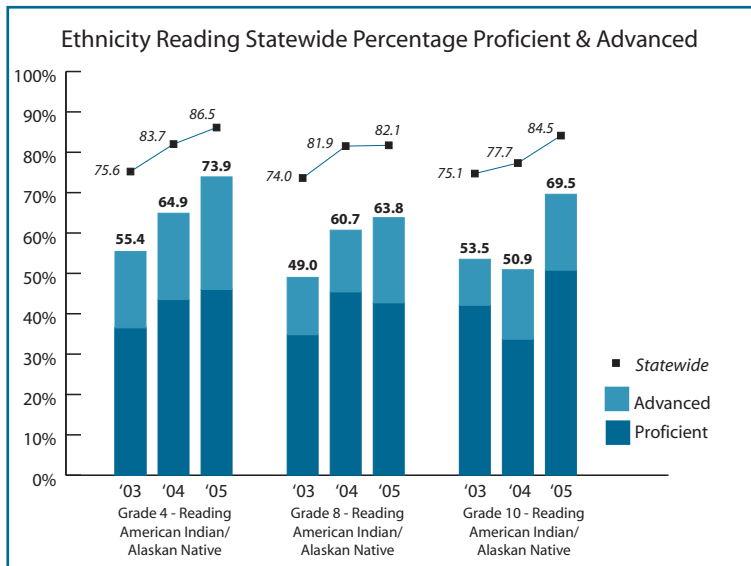


In Fall 2004, there were 256,004 students enrolled in Idaho public schools.

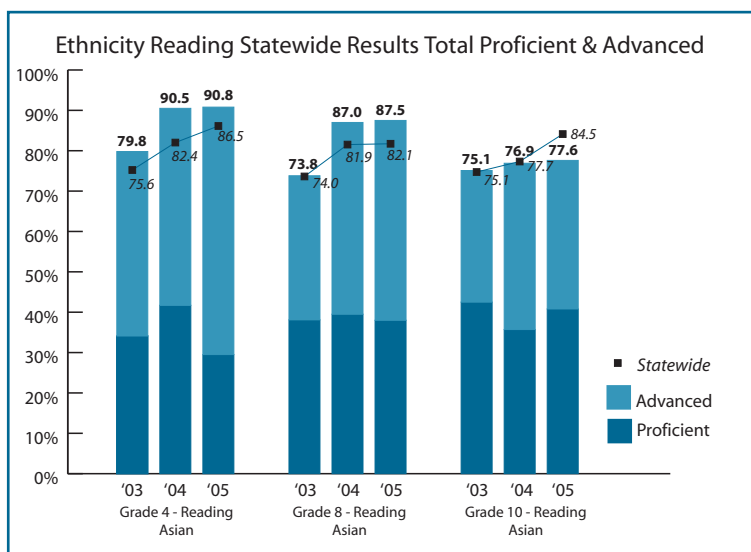
Reading Results - Ethnicity



Black/African American students made a strong jump in the reading proficiency rates in 10th grade this year. Students in 8th grade lost nearly 3% from 2004, however, 10th grade students increased reading proficiency rates by 14.4% over the past year. Black/African American students in 4th grade have continued to increase proficiency rates although they have lagged behind the statewide results in the past two years.



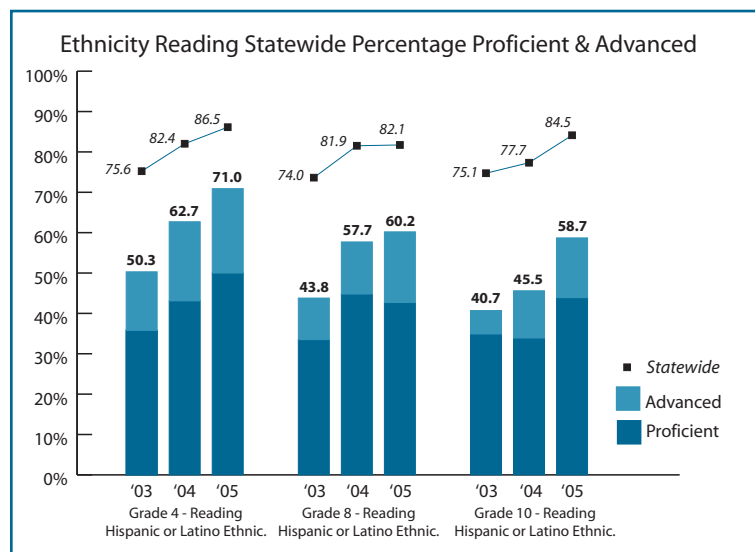
American Indian/Alaskan Native students in 8th grade increased proficiency rates from 60.7% in 2004 to 63.8% in 2005. There were two years of strong jumps in 4th grade reading proficiency rates for American Indian/Alaskan Native students of 9% or more. Tenth grade students increased proficiency rates 18.6% over the past year.



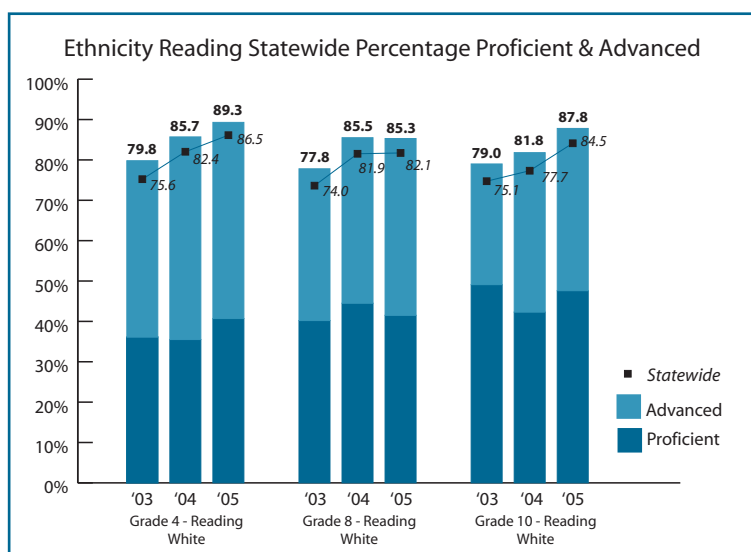
Asian students have consistently remained above the statewide proficiency rate for the past three years in reading except in 10th grade during 2005. This year, 10th grade Asian students dropped 6.9% below the statewide proficiency rate in reading.



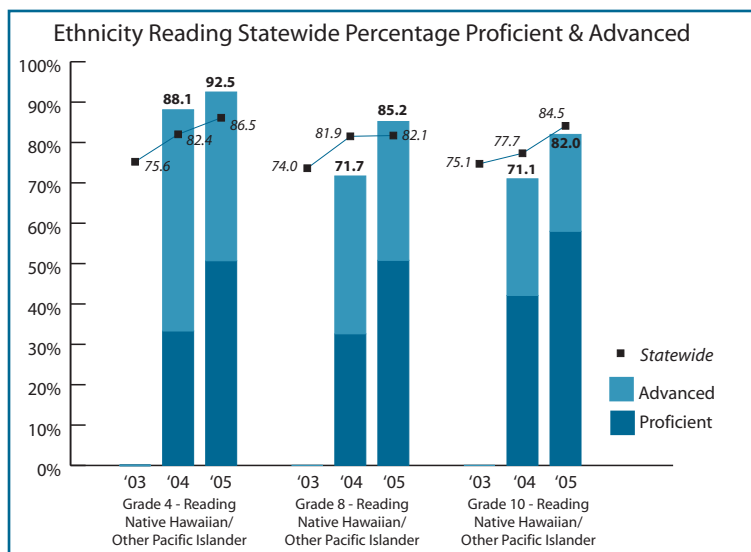
Reading Results - Ethnicity



Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan Native students in 10th grade have significantly closed the gap in reading from White students. Tenth grade Hispanic students raised the proficiency percentage from 40.7% in 2003 to 58.7% in 2005. Hispanic students in 4th grade have steadily increased the proficiency rate by 20.7% from 2003 to 2005.



White students have higher proficiency rates than the statewide results in 4th, 8th, and 10th grades in 2003-2005. White students have gained proficiency except in 8th grade in 2005. White students have gained an average of 4.3% in reading proficiency each year with the highest gain in 8th grade from 2003 to 2004.



NOTE: In 2003, the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup was part of the Asian subgroup thus there are no results for this subgroup in 2003. The Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup is traditionally very small, typically around 50 students. This can cause large fluctuations in the percentages.

Fourth grade Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students have high proficiency rates, 88.1% in 2004 and 92.5% in 2005. Eighth graders increased 13.5% from 2004 to 2005 exceeding the statewide results by 3% in 2005. Tenth grade students increased in 2005 by 10.9%.

ISAT
Quick
Quiz?

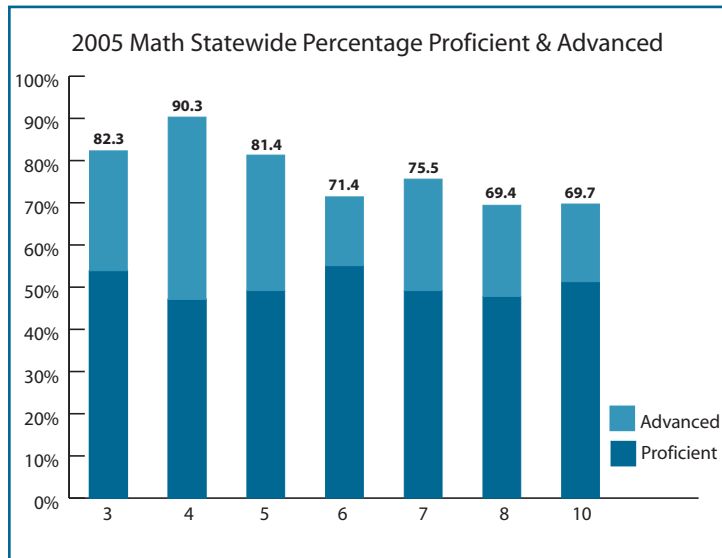
Reading 6th grade

Divide the word kitten into syllables.

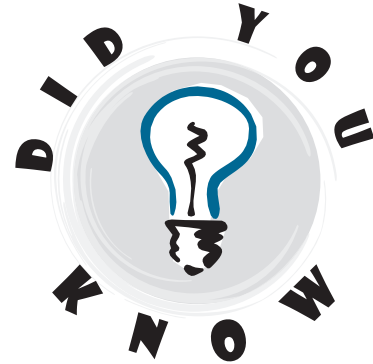
- A. kit.ten
- B. ki.tten
- C. kitt.en
- D. kitte.n

The Answer is: A

Statewide Math Results



Across grades 3 – 8 and 10, the highest rate of math proficiency is in grade 4 at 90.3%. The lowest rate is grade 8 at 69.4%. Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 all show proficiency rates from 20.9% to 8.9% less than grade 4.

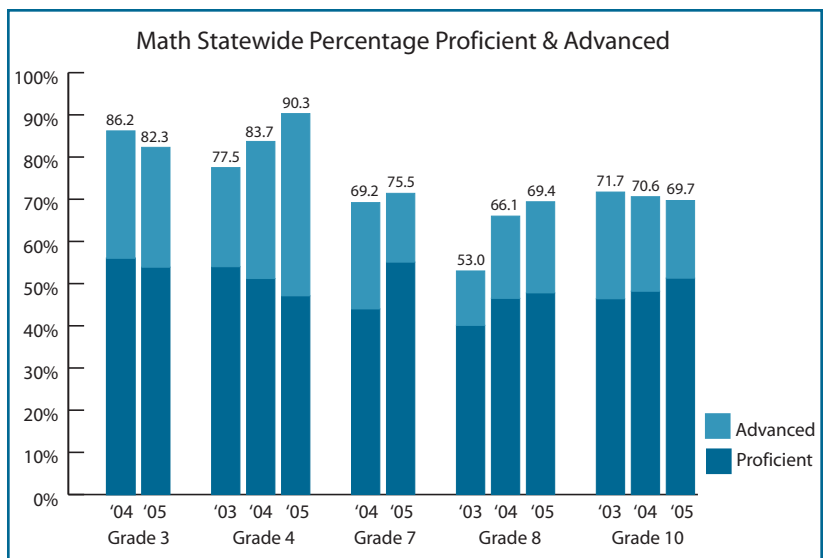


The ISAT is not timed.
Students are given as
much time as
necessary to finish.

Faces
of ISAT

**APRIL MODICA, AGE 13
LEWIS-CLARK
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

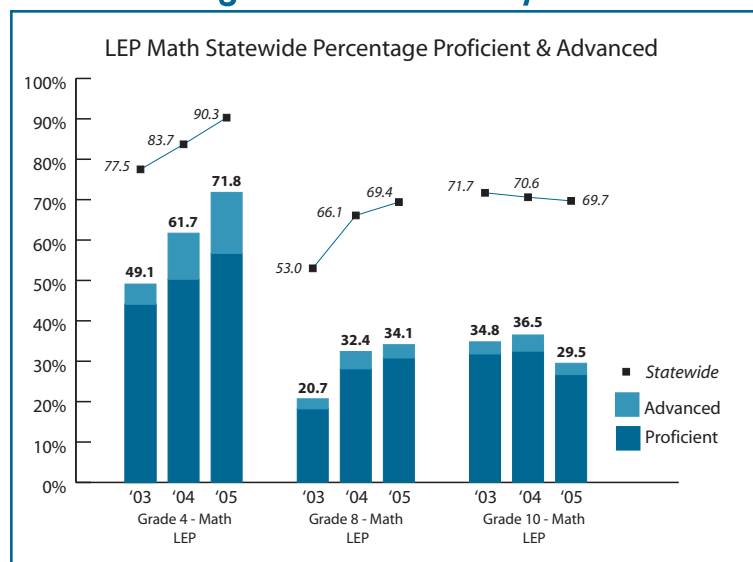
My 6th grade teacher, Mrs. Compton, was very proud of how much we grew in such a short amount of time. She always said, "All you have to do is set a goal, believe you can achieve it, and try your hardest to meet that goal." I never truly believed that I could really meet my goal, but I took her advice and I really did succeed. It was an amazing feeling. I'm taking the ISAT now in 7th grade. I'm feeling confident and I keep improving my scores. I feel totally different about the ISAT now. I always tell my friends the advice that Mrs. Compton gave me, they relax and get really good scores. Take your time on the tests, do your best, and you will feel amazing too!



Grades 4, 7, and 8 had consistent gains in mathematics. The largest gain was in 8th grade where the proficiency increased from 53% in 2003 to 69.4% in 2005. Grades 3 and 10 showed decreases – the most pronounced in 3rd grade with a decrease of 3.9%.

NOTE: The State of Idaho has phased in on-grade level tests to determine proficiency levels. In 2003, grades 4, 8 and 10 were given on-grade level tests. In 2004, grades 3 and 7 were added and in 2005, grades 5 and 6 were added. Thus, in the statewide graph above grades 4, 8 and 10 have three years and grade 3 and 7 have two years of proficiency data.

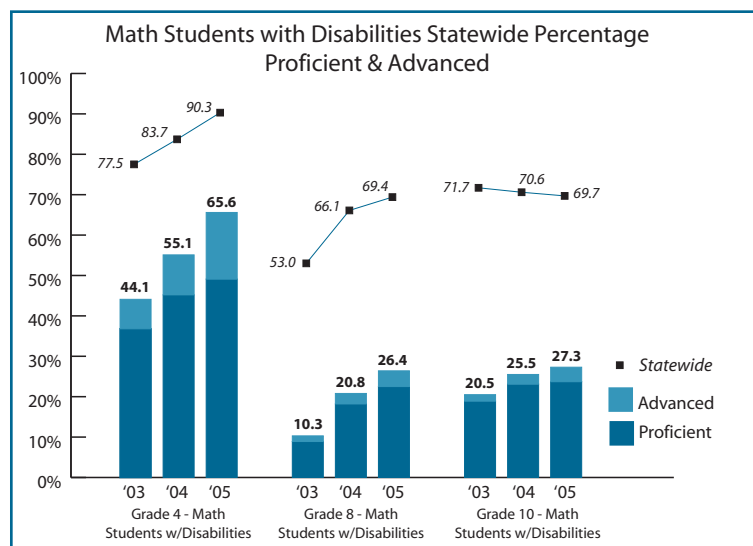
Limited English Proficiency



Fourth grade Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have made steady gains over the past three years, however, they saw flat growth or losses the past two years in grades 8 and 10.

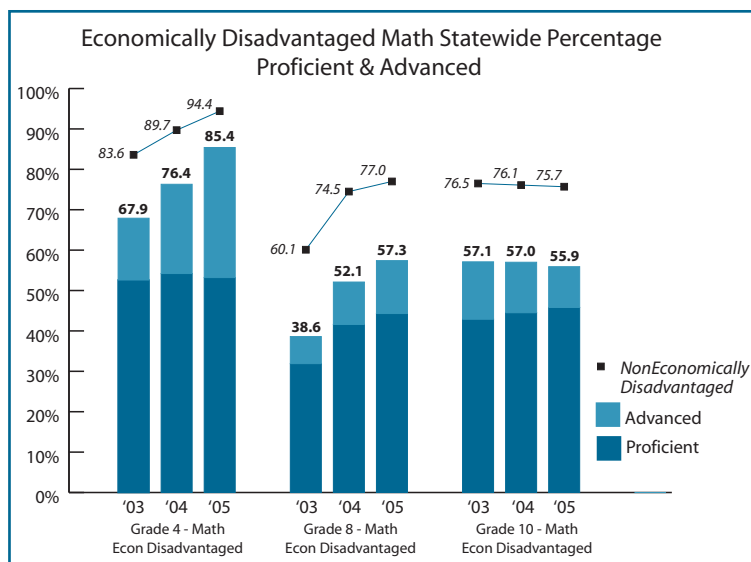
NOTE: LEP data collection changed in 2004 when students who had exited an LEP program within the past two years began being counted in the subgroup results. This change affects the results when viewing 2003 data.

Students with Disabilities



Students with disabilities have continued to make gains; in grades 4 and 10 that rate is higher than the statewide gain. In 2005, 10.5% more 4th grade students with disabilities were proficient than in 2004. For the same period, the statewide proficiency rate increased by 6.6%.

Economically Disadvantaged

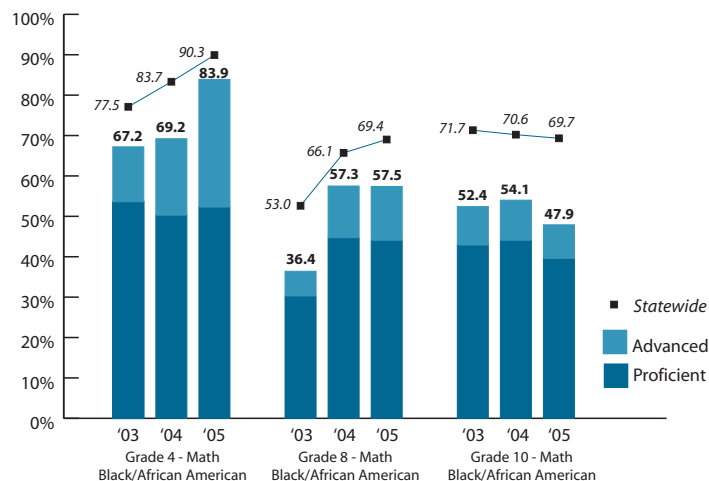


Proficiency rates for economically disadvantaged students mirror the statewide rates in 4th, 8th and 10th grades in math for the past three years. Those rates show a large increase in the proficiency rate in 4th grade, a slight increase in 8th grade and a slight decrease in 10th grade. Fourth graders have a proficiency rate 17.5% higher in 2005 than in 2003; the 8th grade rate is 18.7% higher. The gap widened in 3rd grade math with a statistically significant increase in the gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students' performance.



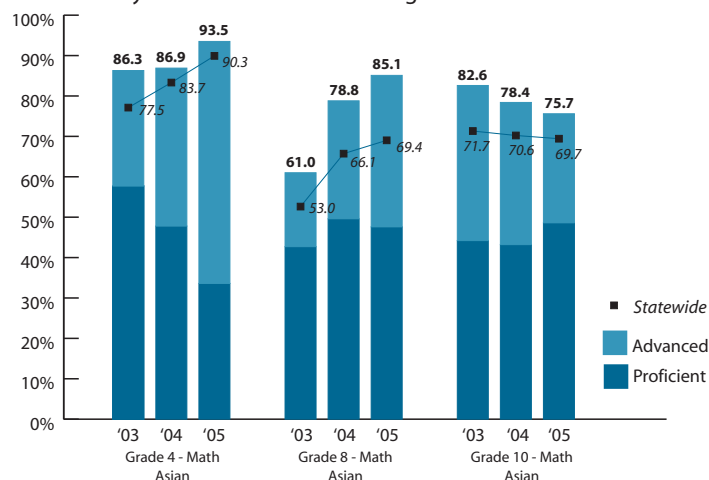
Math Results by Ethnicity

Ethnicity Math Statewide Percentage Proficient & Advanced



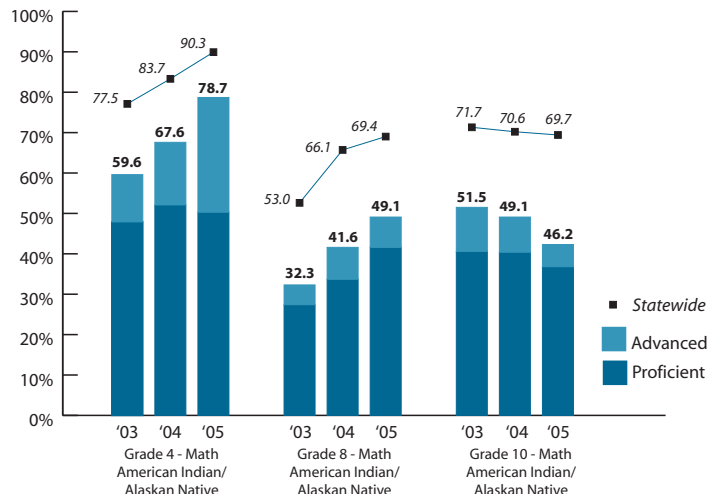
Fourth grade Black/African American students made a 14.7% increase in proficiency rates bringing this group within 6.4% of the statewide average. Eighth grade African American students made the largest gains from 2003 to 2004 with negligible gains in 2005. Tenth grade African American students lost the most ground of all ethnicities - decreasing proficiency rates 6.2% from 2004 to 2005.

Ethnicity Math Statewide Percentage Proficient & Advanced



Asian students consistently exceed the statewide proficiency rate. Asian 10th graders have a more pronounced decrease in math proficiency over the past three years from 82.6% in 2003 to 75.7% in 2005.

Ethnicity Math Statewide Percentage Proficient & Advanced



American Indian/Alaskan Native students in grades 4 and 8 still lag well behind the statewide results. The group has followed the state pattern of increasing proficiency levels only at a greater rate.

From 2004 to 2005, only American Indian/Alaskan Native 4th graders increased proficiency rates 11.1% while the state increase was 6.6%. In 8th grade, American Indian/Alaskan Native students increased by 7.5% while the state increase was only 3.3%.

American Indian/Alaskan Native students in grades 3, 4, 7, and 8 have closed the proficiency rate gap between white students by an average of 5% in the last year.

Math 10th grade

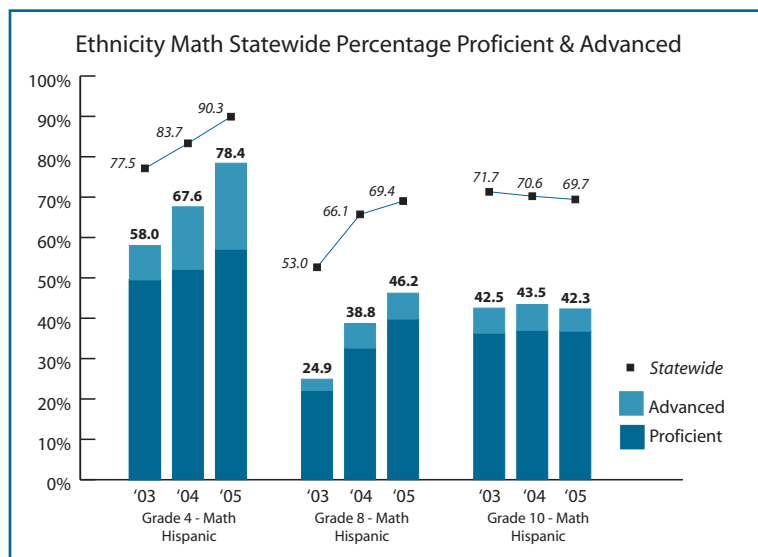
A temperature of 33 Fahrenheit is closest to:

- A. 100 C (Celsius)
- B. 68 C
- C. 1 C
- D. 212 C
- E. -32 C

The Answer is: C

ISAT
Quick Quiz?

Math Results by Ethnicity



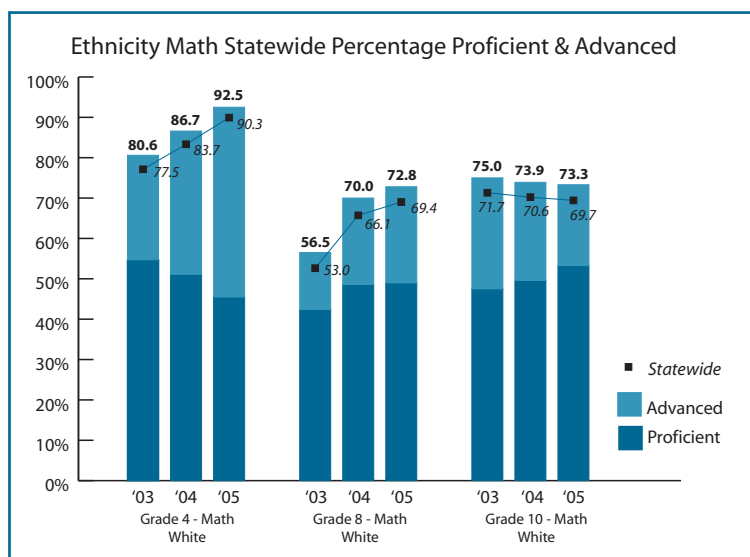
Hispanic students in 4th and 8th grades have continued to make strong gains in the proficiency rates. The 4th grade students have mimicked the statewide rate gains, but 8th grade Hispanic students have seen an even bigger jump. From 2004 to 2005, 8th grade Hispanic students increased proficiency rates by 7.4%. Fourth grade Hispanic students have narrowed the gap from the statewide results by 4.2% and 8th grade has narrowed the gap by 4.1% from 2004 to 2005.

Faces
of ISAT

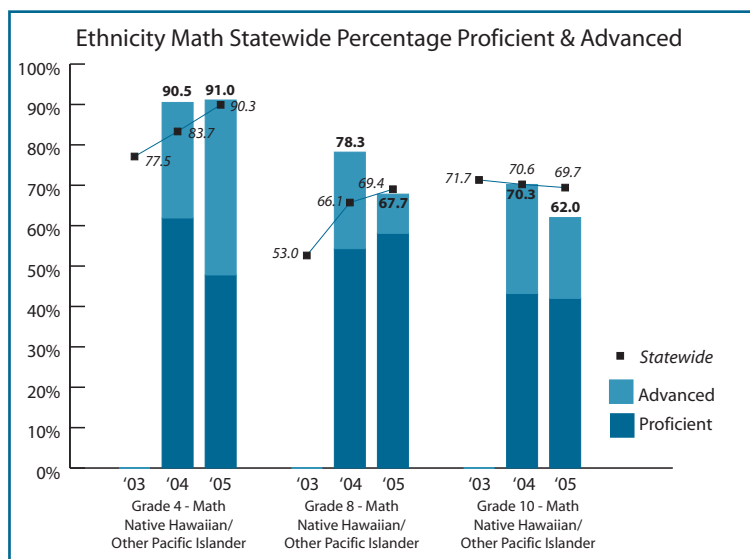
SENATOR JOHN GOEDDE
CHAIR,
SENATE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE



I believe our future depends on how well our students are prepared to participate in all aspects of our society. Idaho taxpayers invest more than \$1 billion annually in K-12 educational services. Prior to the implementation of the ISAT, we had no consistent measurement tool to determine the effectiveness of that investment. Now that results are being measured, students and teachers are working to improve those results and each can tell how well they are doing. Graduates who pass the ISAT tests can have real confidence in the skills they have mastered.



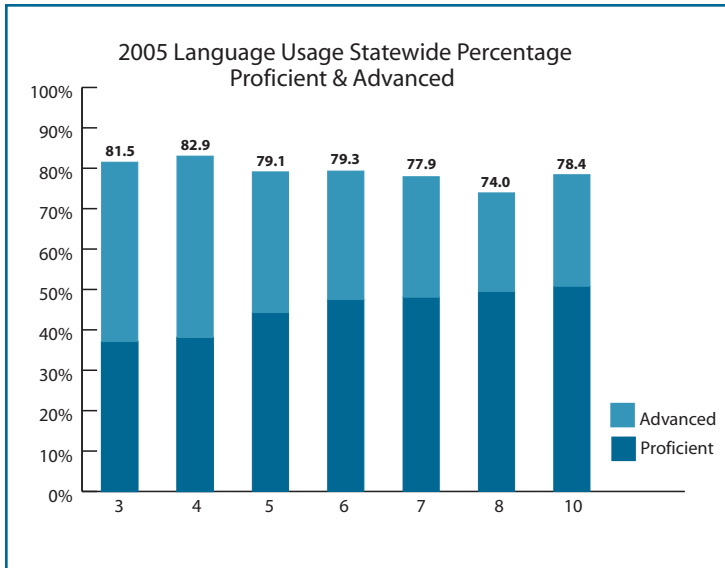
White students in grades 4, 8 and 10 exceed the statewide results by 2.2% in grade 4, 3.4% in grade 8 and 3.6% in grade 10. White 4th and 8th graders have shown steady increases in the proficiency rates and 10th graders decreases slightly over the past three years.



NOTE: In 2003, the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup was part of the Asian subgroup thus there are no results for this subgroup in 2003. The Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup is traditionally very small, typically around 50 students. This can cause large fluctuations in the percentages.

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students exceed a 90% proficiency rate in 4th grade math. Eighth and 10th grade students had large decreases in the last year: 10.6% in 8th grade and 8.3% in 10th grade. One of the most dramatic increases in percent of advanced students occurred in 4th grade.

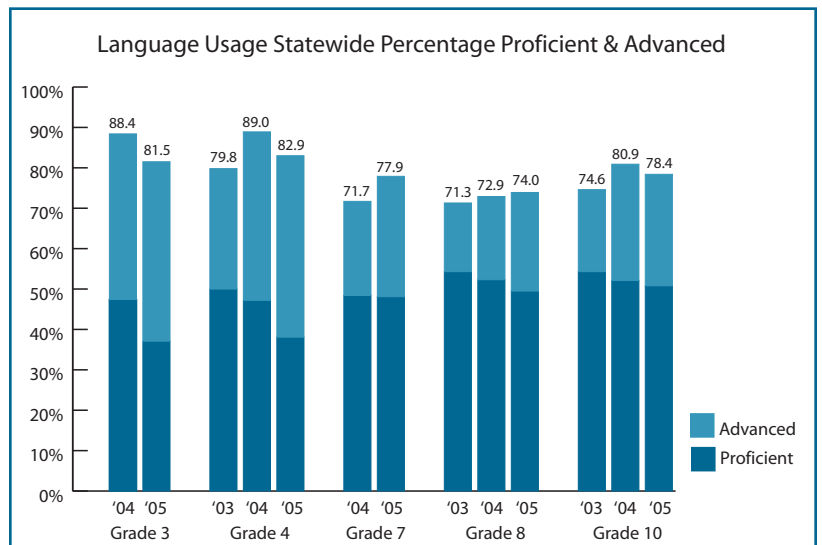
Statewide Language Usage Results



In previous years, language usage has had some of the highest rates of proficiency compared to the three subject areas. In 2005, the highest rates were in reading in grades 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10. Fourth grade students had the highest proficiency rates in math at 90.3%. Fifth grade students were the only grade with the highest proficiency rates in language usage.



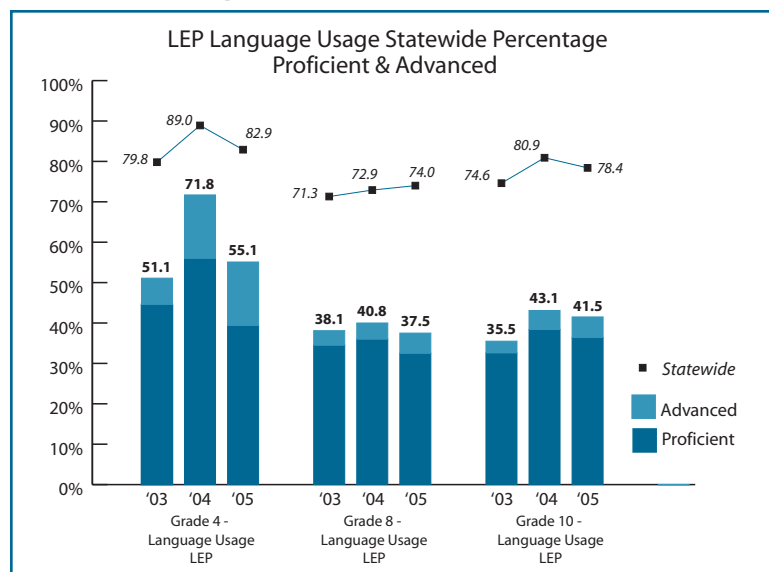
The state allows testing accommodations for students with disabilities and students identified as Limited English Proficient.



Language usage is the only subject where 4th grade students lost ground. Fourth grade students fluctuated from 79.8% to 89% to 82.9% proficient. Grades 3 and 10 also decreased 88.4% to 81.5% and 80.9% to 78.4% from 2004 to 2005 respectively. Grades 7 and 8 showed increases.

NOTE: The State of Idaho has phased in on-grade level tests to determine proficiency levels. In 2003, grades 4, 8 and 10 were given on-grade level tests. In 2004, grades 3 and 7 were added and in 2005, grades 5 and 6 were added. Thus, in the statewide graph above grades 4, 8 and 10 have three years and grade 3 and 7 have two years of proficiency data.

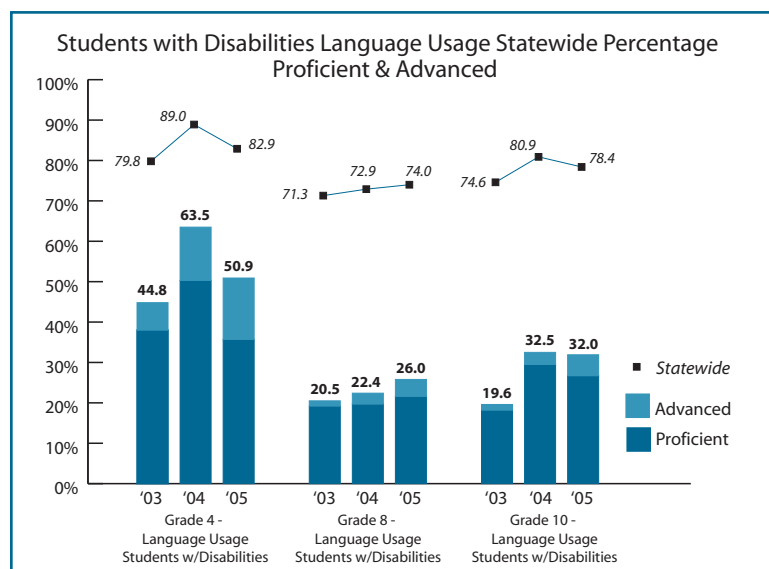
Limited English Proficiency



Limited English Proficient (LEP) 8th and 10th grade students showed stable proficiency rates over three years. Fourth grade LEP students dropped 16.7% in proficiency from 2004 to 2005.

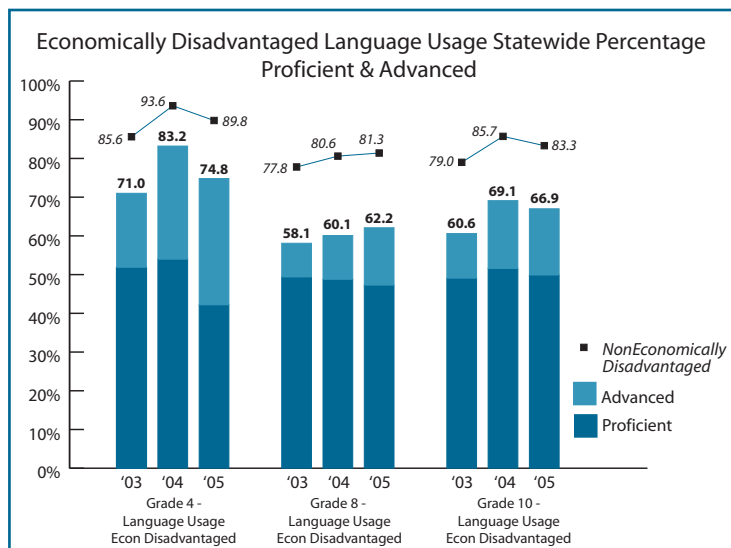
NOTE: LEP data collection changed in 2004 when students who had exited an LEP program within the past two years began being counted in the subgroup results. This change affects the results when viewing 2003 data.

Students with Disabilities



Students with disabilities have stayed relatively consistent in the proficiency rates over the past two years in grade 10. Grade 4 showed a proficiency rate increase of 18.7% from 2003 to 2004; however, they experienced a drop of 12.6% from 2004 to 2005.

Economically Disadvantaged



Statewide proficiency rates decreased in 4th and 10th grades, the economically disadvantaged rates also decreased in 4th and 10th grades. Eighth grade economically disadvantaged students' proficiency rates increased from 60.1% in 2004 to 62.2% in 2005. The drop in proficiency rates in 4th grade was the most drastic from 83.2% in 2004 to 74.8% in 2005, an 8.4% decrease. Grades 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10 all showed a statistically significant increase in the gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students from 2004 to 2005.

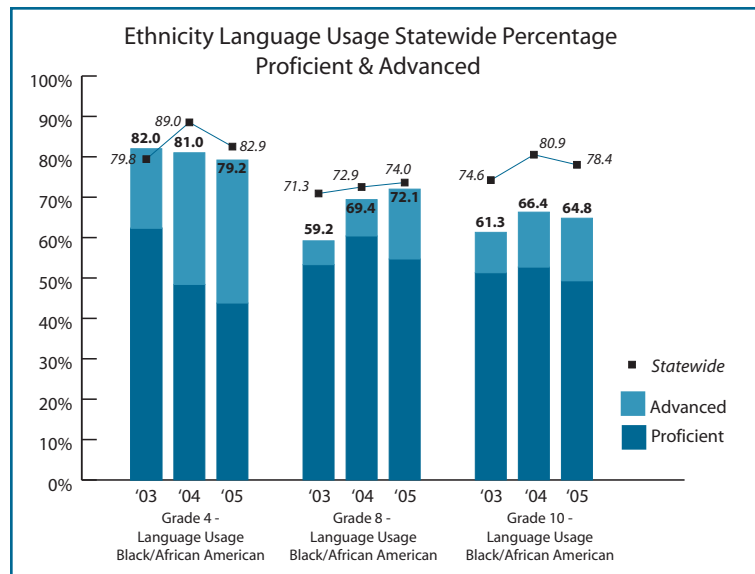
Language Usage 2nd grade

Which is a complete sentence?

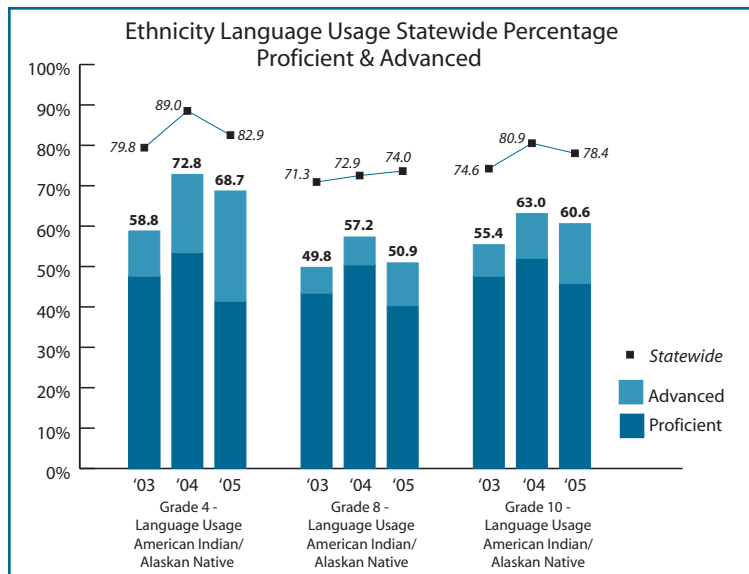
- A. The pretty blue sky.
- B. The moon is shining in.
- C. The moon is shining brightly.
- D. The moon is brighter than.

The Answer is: C.

Language Usage Results by Ethnicity



African American 8th grade students have shown consistent gains from 2003 to 2005; 4th and 10th grade students have shown a moderate drop. Eighth grade African American students' proficiency rates are less than 2% from the statewide results.



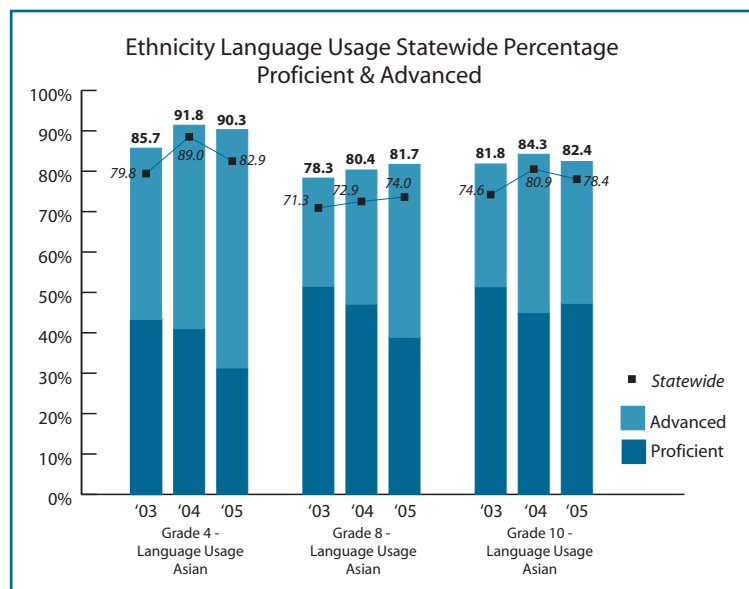
Eighth grade American Indian/Alaskan Native students were the only ethnic group to show a decrease in 8th grade proficiency rates for 2005. This group dropped from 57.2% to 50.9%.



Faces of ISAT

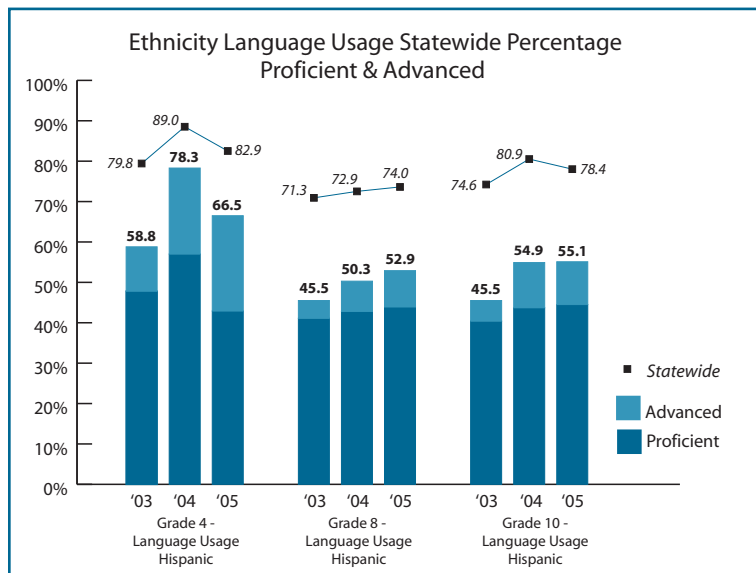
JACKIE THOMASON
TESTING COORDINATOR
MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

At the heart of successful school improvement efforts is the effective use of data. Idaho's educators are developing the skills and tools needed to effectively analyze and interpret ISAT data. Through the use of these skills and tools, educators are transforming ISAT data into meaningful information. Linking the ISAT information to other assessment and school data provides a solid foundation for actions that improve school performance and increase student achievement.

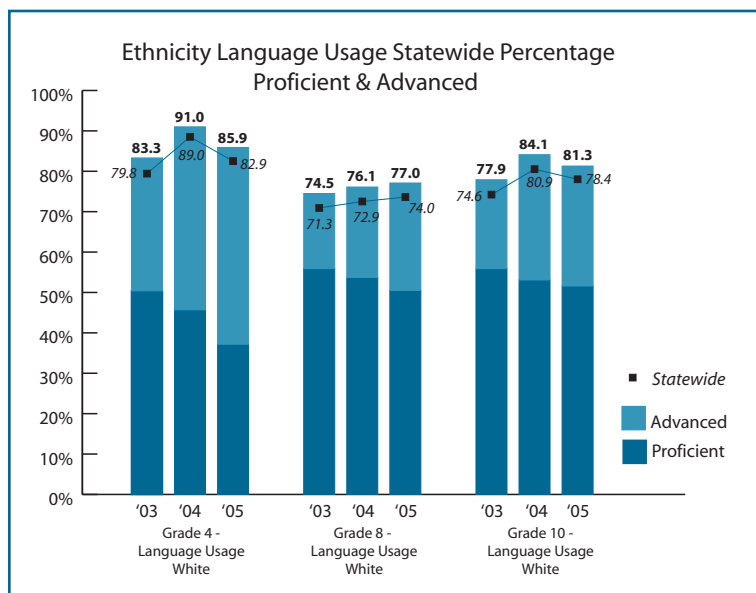


Asian students had the strongest language usage proficiency rates among the ethnicities, including the least amount of loss. In grades 8 and 10, the rates stayed consistent with a slight decrease in 10th grade for Asian students.

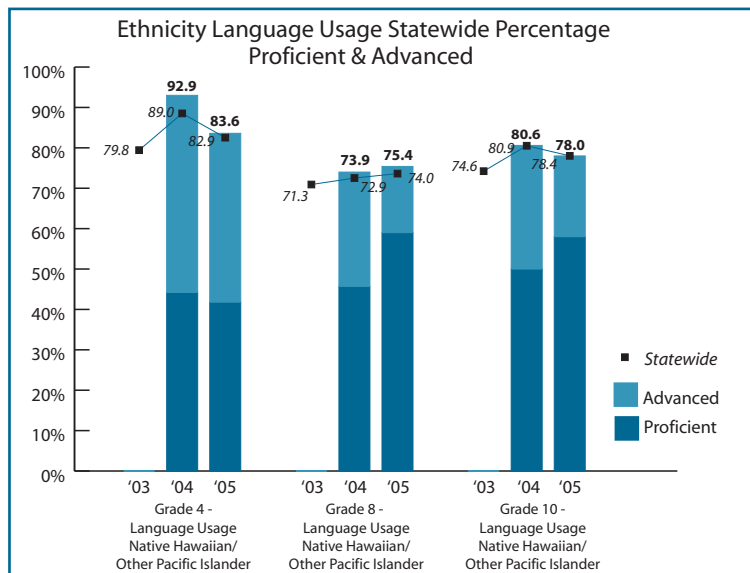
Language Usage Results by Ethnicity



All ethnicity groups decreased proficiency rates in language usage in 4th grade. The largest decrease was 11.8% for Hispanic students. Hispanic students in grades 8 and 10 have maintained consistent proficiency rates.

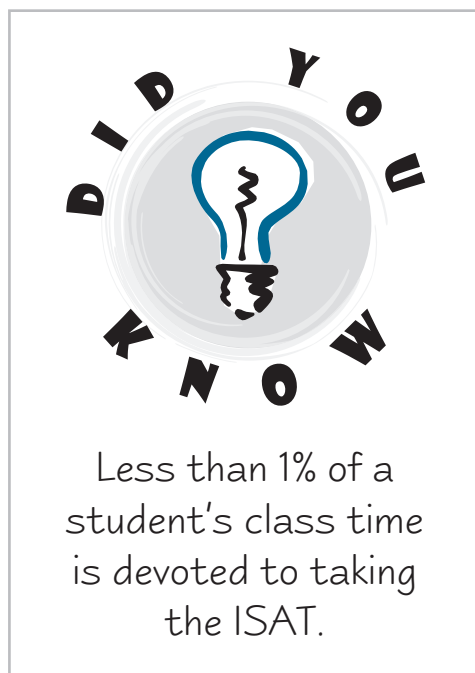


White students results mirror that of the statewide results, as is to be expected since White students make up the greatest number of students in Idaho. White students in grades 4, 8 and 10 exceed the statewide results by 3% in grade 4, 3% in grade 8 and 2.9% in grade 10. White 4th and 8th graders have shown steady increases in the proficiency rates and 10th graders decreases slightly over the past three years.



NOTE: In 2003, the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup was part of the Asian subgroup thus there are no results for this subgroup in 2003. The Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup is traditionally very small, typically around 50 students. This can cause large fluctuations in the percentages.

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students' proficiency rates were almost exactly the same as the statewide rates for 2005. Eighth graders increased slightly and 4th and 10th graders proficiency rates decreased. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander 4th graders decreased proficiency rates 9.3% and 10th graders decreased 2.6% from 2004 to 2005.



Spring 2005

ISAT

Idaho Standards Achievement Tests

FAQ Parent Questions

Q: How can I help my child on the ISAT?

A: The best thing parents can do is to stay involved with their students. This includes ensuring the student attends school regularly, that he/she completes all homework assignments and understanding test scores to know where the student is excelling or where he/she might need more work. It is important to work with the student's teacher to outline a plan for addressing deficient areas. Parents can also use the practice ISAT questions on the web at: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/standards.asp> or learn more about what the student is expected to know for their grade level by looking at the content standards at: <http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/saa/standards.asp>.



Faces of ISAT

**CHUCK KINSEY,
SUPERINTENDENT
LAKELAND SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

Lakeland Joint School District utilizes the ISAT as a primary target for student achievement. This test has provided a curriculum focus that was missing from previous standardized testing. Like most school districts across the state of Idaho, we have aligned our curriculum to the state standards. This has taken many hours of hard work on the part of teachers and principals, and it is an ongoing process. From the aligned curriculum, teachers prepare instructional calendars that include quarterly benchmarks. The test is utilized to determine strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, of the instruction, and of the students. The nature of the test allows the student and the teacher immediate feedback, and through the use of learning continuum, targets specific skills that may need improvement.

Q: How does the ISAT relate to what my child is learning in class?

A: The ISAT and classroom instruction are both based on the state content standards. The content standards describe what students should know, such as adding single digit numbers or being able to identify the components of the writing process. The questions on the ISAT are a sample of what students are learning in the classroom.

Q: What do my child's ISAT scores mean?

A: The ISAT is measured on a continuous scale from 150 to 300 (RIT). There are different scales for each subject area so a 240 on the math test is not the same as a 240 on the reading test. Each grade has a particular score that indicates when a student has reached "proficiency," or has the knowledge we would expect for that grade level. Each of the tests also has subscores that will indicate what score the student received for statistics versus measurement, for example.

Q: Is there a maximum number of alternate assessments allowed per school district?

A: Yes. Each school district is allowed to have a maximum number of alternate assessments equal to 1% of their total tested student population. School districts may appeal if their number is greater than 1%.

Q: Does Idaho have to use the same test as every other state for No Child Left Behind?

A: State flexibility is a key element within No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Each state has been given the flexibility to determine a variety of factors, including the definition of proficiency, the starting point for progress measurement, and the amount of progress that must be made from year to year. Idaho's test is just that – Idaho's test.

I-PLN Helps Idaho Students Make Classroom Gains

A computer software package designed to help students improve in reading, language usage and math is now in 107 Idaho school districts. Educators point to classroom results to prove that the Idaho PLATO Learning Network (I-PLN) is making a difference.

Saundra DeKlotz, federal programs manager for the State Board of Education, said that this software gives schools a powerful tool. Teachers can enter information for a child into the program, which then produces an individualized course of study, unique to that student.

"Schools are really getting into this," DeKlotz said, adding that many of the schools already are sharing stories of student success.

"Teachers care about their kids, so it is exciting when they see a breakthrough," she said. "To see them have that success is a wonderful thing."

DeKlotz said the stories should be even better a year from now because many of the schools involved have only recently come online.

"It takes time to get all of the schools informed, on board, trained and then to get them using it," DeKlotz said. "I expect this coming year will be a really exciting one."

Some districts, however, started using PLATO on their own, years before the program went statewide. Doris Matthews works in technology in the Nampa School District, which started using the software about three years ago.

"It's a tool for teachers to help kids," she said. "It reinforces what the teacher has taught."

Matthews said the district wanted to ensure that the program was actually having an impact, so she was commissioned to compare classrooms that used PLATO with others that did not.

"It's a tool for teachers to help kids. It reinforces what the teacher has taught."

*Doris Matthews
Nampa School District*



Matthews said she has two years of data from one elementary classroom, which she compared with three other classrooms that did not consistently use the PLATO software.

"In that one classroom, 24 out of 26 students met or exceeded their goals for growth in math," she said. "In the other classrooms, it was like 10 or 15."

Post Falls Technology Coordinator Jon Wilkerson reported similar results in a classroom of 30 high school students. "Twenty-nine of them went up in their scores with an average of 13 points per student," he said. "We were just amazed at these results. It's been a godsend."

Matt Gunderson is one of two educators, who lead the Post Falls class. He said that many of these students have done poorly in school because of attendance issues. That's the benefit of PLATO. Every time a student comes to class, he picks up right where he left off the last time.

"They're not going to be left behind," Gunderson said. "They're not going to escape the parts they're missing. It's personalized."

He stressed that the computer software can't replace good teaching, pointing to the fact that in his classroom, two teachers work with only about 10 students at a time.

"It's essential that students get as much teacher interaction as possible," Gunderson said, adding that students, who ask for and accept help, almost always do better.

What's Next for ISAT?

The State Board of Education contracted with Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) to evaluate the ISAT and school districts' efforts to teach a curriculum based on the Idaho standards.

This review confirmed many of the strengths of the Idaho test and made recommendations to help the Board create a more comprehensive exam.

The ISAT is a series of three tests given to students in grades 2 through 10 in reading, math, and language usage. Students in grades 5, 7, and 10 also take a science test. The ISAT is one of a few tests in the nation that measures student growth and student learning at grade-level. Because the ISAT is a computerized test, it provides instant feedback to students, teachers and parents.

While the current ISAT is meeting many student assessment needs, the Board plans to evaluate the HumRRO report to improve the ISAT. The first step will be to review and reorganize all Idaho

standards as needed and to revise the test blueprints, to enhance alignment between the standards and test questions.

Rearranging the standards and constructing the new test blueprint is targeted for completion in time for the spring 2006 test.

The report also indicated the ISAT has solid reliability (consistently giving students accurate scores) and validity (measuring what the test is intended to measure).

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